

John W. Gardner

 **Common Cause**

2100 M Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20037

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EMP

Common Cause

2100 M Street, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20037

(202) 293-1530

JOHN W. GARDNER, Chairman

Dear Friend:

In September of 1970 I asked concerned Americans to join me in forming a new, independent, nonpartisan organization called ~~Common Cause~~, to help in the rebuilding of this nation. The response was astonishing. We set a goal of 100,000 members for the first year, and we reached it in 23 weeks! And members continue to pour in.

I invite you to join Common Cause.

There is so much that needs to be done. There are so few who are properly organized to do it. We must end the war now. We must bring about a drastic change in national priorities. We must renew our attack on poverty and discrimination. And we must keep at it until we build a new America.

I trust you share my concern and my deep sense of urgency. We must act now. We must demand more of ourselves and much, much more of our leaders. We must shake up and renew outworn institutions.

Common Cause offers you the opportunity.

Common Cause is not a third party, but a third force in American life which will uphold the public interest against all comers, particularly the ~~special interests that dominate~~ our national life today. Common Cause will not support candidates; it will confine itself to issues.

Many people today recognize that national priorities must be changed, but they don't know how to go about it. They are shocked by the facts of poverty and pollution and inadequate housing, but they don't know what to do.

Common Cause will assist you to speak and act in behalf of legislation designed to solve the nation's problems. We are building a true "citizens' lobby" -- concerned not with the advancement of special interests but with the well-being of the nation. We will keep you up-to-date on crucial issues before Congress. We will suggest when and where to bring pressure to bear.

One of our aims is to revitalize politics and government. The need is great. State governments are mostly feeble. City

government is archaic. The Congress of the United States is in grave need of overhaul. The parties are not set up in such a way as to be responsive to the will of their members. We can no longer accept such obsolescence.

Most parts of the system have grown so rigid that they cannot respond to impending disaster. They are so ill-designed for contemporary purposes that they waste taxpayers' money, mangle good programs and frustrate every good man who enters the system.

The solutions are not mysterious. Any capable city councilman, state legislator, party official, or Member of Congress can tell you highly practical steps that might be taken tomorrow to make the system more responsive. But there has been no active, powerful, hard-hitting constituency to fight for such steps. We now provide that kind of constituency. Join us in the fight.

Skeptics say "But you can't really change such things." The Congress of the United States has changed in dramatic ways since its founding. Why should we assume it has lost the capacity to change further?

The political parties have changed even more dramatically since the birth of the Republic. They can change again.

I shall not attempt to list here all the issues with which Common Cause is concerned. We believe there is great urgency in ending the Vietnam War on a scheduled timetable. We believe there must be a major reordering of national priorities. We believe the problems of poverty and race must be among our first concerns. We will call for new solutions in housing, employment, education, health, consumer protection, environment, family planning, law enforcement and the administration of justice.

We are certain that none of those problems will be solved unless we accomplish a revitalization of government at all levels. Accordingly our first major battle was an attempt to modify the archaic seniority system that prevents the U.S. Congress from being a responsive instrument of government. Common Cause members all over the country joined the battle -- and in January Democrats and Republicans in the House of Representatives voted the first real crack in the rigid system. Both Members of Congress and journalists have credited Common Cause with a

large role in creating the climate of opinion that produced that result.

As a member you will be asked to help in identifying priority issues. We have already sent out one referendum asking members to tell us what they consider to be the crucial issues. We will do so again periodically.

We do not expect every member to agree with every detail of our agenda. But our governing board has learned that it is possible to arrive at significant proposals that will be agreed on by Americans of widely differing backgrounds.

We take the phrase "Common Cause" seriously. The things that unite us as a people are more important than the things that divide us. No particular interest group can prosper for long if the nation is disintegrating. Every group must have an overriding interest in the well-being of the whole society. It follows that our agenda must be an agenda for all Americans -- for the poor, the comfortable and those in between, for old and young, for black and white, for city dweller and farmer, for men and women.

Many of you who will receive this letter share my anger at institutions and individuals that have behaved irresponsibly. But, if we're going to focus our anger, a good place to begin is with ourselves.

We have not behaved like a great people. We are not being the people we set out to be. We have not lived by the values we profess to honor.

America is not the nation it set out to be. And we will never get back on course until we take some tough, realistic steps to revitalize our institutions. That won't be easy or comfortable. Institutions don't enjoy the process of renewal. But we had better get on with it.

In recent years we have seen altogether too much complacency, narrow self-interest, meanness of mind and spirit, irrational hatred and fear. But as I travel around the country, I see something else. I see great remaining strength in this nation. I see deeper reserves of devotion and community concern than are being tapped by present leadership. I see many, many Americans

who would like to help rebuild this nation but don't know where to begin.

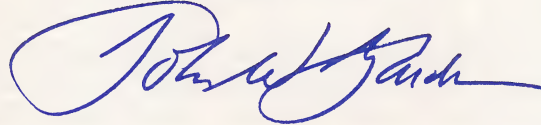
I invite you to become a part of the rapidly growing membership of Common Cause.

We cannot and should not depend on big contributors. The money to support our work must come from the members themselves.

We therefore ask you to enclose a check for \$15 with your membership application. Or, if you prefer, we will bill you later for that amount.

With a large and active membership we can begin to remake America.

Sincerely yours,



John W. Gardner

After spending the last 5 years in Washington as Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare and as Chairman of the Urban Coalition, John Gardner is convinced that only an aroused and organized citizenry can revitalize "The System" and change the nation's disastrous course.



About Common Cause

By February 1971, less than 6 months after its inception, over 100,000 concerned citizens had become members of COMMON CAUSE. And the membership grows by thousands every week! Hundreds of newspapers across the country carry encouraging stories and editorials on the bold and imaginative effort of Common Cause to bring about a political renaissance in our time. Common Cause's vigorous stand against the out-dated and paralyzing seniority system in Congress; its suit against both major political parties for violating federal campaign spending statutes; its stand on war, poverty, civil rights, and many other pressing issues of the day testify eloquently to the dedicated efforts of the staff and members of COMMON CAUSE. "Not a third party but a third force" . . . that's the rallying cry of COMMON CAUSE. The force is at work now influencing your country's crucial political processes. Join with your active support, today.

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* The Policy Council will be expanded with provision for participation by Common Cause members.



Common Cause

2100 M Street, N.W., Washington, D. C. 20037

COMMON CAUSE

The aim of Mr. Gardner's effort is not to found a new party or win a particular campaign. It is to rally the moderates and stop the process of polarization. His hope is to freshen the springs of political life, to recruit new talent for both parties and at every level of government, to concentrate attention on the issues that are genuinely significant, to sponsor needed reforms. It is a bold and ambitious undertaking which Mr. Gardner and his colleagues are attempting. Self-government lives by that kind of boldness and ambition.

The New York Times

What newspapers around the country are saying about COMMON CAUSE's programs for reform, renewal and restoration.

... Making government more responsive to today's needs

A SECOND AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Common Cause, in Gardner's view, is a citizen's lobby designed to bring pressure through the political process to reform and redesign government so that it will be more responsive to today's needs. . . .

While the idea is not revolutionary, if it is successful, Common Cause could help bring about revolutionary change in America. And that is just what Gardner and his associates want — a second American Revolution that will make yet another attempt to do what the first one set out to do 200 years ago.

*The Graphic Herald
(Downers Grove, Ill.)*

AN IDEA WHOSE TIME HAS COME

Good intentions are not enough to make a citizen's lobby effective. Some such efforts, Gardner concedes, have been 'fumbling, inchoate, amateurish.' He hopes that Common Cause will be different because of the special expertise and influence of its supporters, and because it is an idea whose time has come. Besides, he insists, "the folk cynicism about citizen efforts is negated by the record. The conservation movement, family planning, the Viet Nam peace crusade have done pretty well." Women got the vote, child labor was abolished, Prohibition was imposed and then repealed, he says, all "because people raised hell."

Time

CAMPAIGN FUNDS A MOCKERY

The country is only beginning to see how valuable may be the work of citizens' organization like John W. Gardner's Common Cause. On top of everything else (including a drive against the seniority system in Congress), Mr. Gardner has now filed a lawsuit challenging the time-honored fraud by which both political parties evade the limitations on campaign spending through the device of multiple committees. Everybody knows this dodge makes a mockery of the campaign funds limitation, but nobody up to now has known what to do about it. In asking the courts to identify evasions of the law for what they are, Mr. Gardner and Common Cause may open the way at last to much-needed reform of campaign funds legislation.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch

DICTATORIAL COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

Congressional reform has become a particular aim of John Gardner's Common Cause organization. Besides attacking the seniority system, it is supporting an expected caucus attack on three chairmen who have been accused of running their committees in dictatorial fashion and failing to follow the party's legislative program.

Schenectady Union-Star

COMMON CAUSE — A CITIZEN'S LOBBY THAT'S WORKABLE

All these groups operate on the premise that there is a definable "public interest," separate from the various private interests, that deserves and needs to be represented in the lobbying process.

Gardner has already had more success than most of the previous "citizens lobby" organizers in proving that premise workable. The Urban Coalition Action Council, predecessor of Common Cause, has in the past two years been one of the most effective lobby groups on Capitol Hill.

The Washington Post

Either we the people will find ways of pulling together, or we may well succeed in ripping apart what is left of the nation's social and political fabric.

Roanoke (Va.) Times

REVISE LOBBY INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES

Common Cause, a non-partisan citizens' group which serves as a Capitol Hill watchdog, believes the Government Accounting Office should be given the power to investigate lobby registrations and reports and to make their findings public. This job is now vested in patronage jobholders who are under political pressure to protect their bosses.

We agree with the watchdog group that the law should be strengthened to force all organizations with a "substantial purpose" to register and report financial information.

Staten Island Advance

WAR IN INDO-CHINA

It is concerned with the reordering of national priorities and with new solutions for the problems that beset this country. One of these is bringing the Vietnam War to an end on a scheduled timetable. Debatable, and debated, as the wisdom of that timetable is, every word of this thoughtful statement of John Gardner's deserves serious consideration by every American. . . .

The Chattanooga Times

When the regular structures of party and government fail to adapt to the country's needs, a force will develop from the outside and either bend or replace those structures.

The Miami Herald

SENIORITY REFORM

Even chairmen tottering into senility or visibly failing in health are protected by the solemn, senseless, indefensible invocation of seniority. Only another Charles Dickens could do justice to the many bizarre consequences of this arrangement and the deaf, doddering, cantankerous, prejudiced and irascible chairmen who can be numbered among its beneficiaries and defenders.

The system cries out for reform. In testifying in behalf of Common Cause, Mr. Gardner speaks for the nation.

The New York Times

REGAIN A VISION OF OUR COMMON PURPOSE

. . . many Americans want something different in political pressure. They want direct attention to their concerns, about race, poverty, pollution, drugs, crime, all of which receive lip service from the two major political parties, and not much else.

The people don't have a lobby in Washington. Their representatives, who should be their pressure agents, default to special interests. Political parties pay more attention to vote than to ideologies or goals.

We thus lose sight of our common purpose. Common Cause can only help us regain our vision.

Muscatine, Iowa Journal

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Yes, I would like to become an active member of Common Cause. I understand that my annual dues of \$15.00* entitle me to receive the Common Cause newsletter plus material pertaining to special issues.

☐ I want to do more. My check includes an additional contribution to Common Cause in the amount of

☐ Check enclosed. ☐ Bill me.

THEODOR H NELSON
BOX 3
SCHOOLEYS MOUNTAIN N J 07870

FMP

- ☐ Miss
☐ Mr.
☐ Mrs.
☐ Mr. & Mrs.**

** Family Membership—
\$15.00

*Of this amount,
\$2.00 is allocated
to the cost of the
newsletter subscription
(10 issues per year).



Detach membership card before returning application

Common Cause
P.O. Box 220, Washington, D.C. 20044



is a member in good standing

This is to certify that

HOW TO HELP EXPAND THE MEMBERSHIP

Are you already a member of Common Cause? If so, please excuse this additional invitation, and consider this suggestion for utilizing these materials to recruit another member.

Simply send the enclosed letter to a friend, perhaps with a little personal note on the margin. Include also the postpaid reply envelope and the attached Pass-Along Membership Application Form.

This way you'll make it easy for him to join . . . and, because you're a member, he or she, will most likely want to join also.

A WORD ABOUT DUPLICATE MAILINGS.

Removing members' names from multiple mailing lists is much more costly than any savings in materials. If you use the enclosures as we suggest (to the left) you will help this mailing serve its purpose.

Detach along perforation and give membership form below to a friend.

Pass-Along
Membership
Application Form

Common Cause

I would like to become an active member of Common Cause. I understand that my annual dues of \$15* entitles me to receive the Common Cause newsletter plus material pertaining to special issues.

Check enclosed ☐ Bill me ☐

☐ I want to do more. My check includes an additional contribution to Common Cause in the amount of \$_____.

☐ Miss Name:_____

☐ Mr. Address:_____

☐ Mrs. _____

☐ Mr. & Mrs.** City:_____ State:_____ ZIP:_____

Telephone No.: Area Code _____

Please return this form
with your \$15 member-
ship fee to



Common Cause
2100 M Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20037

**Family Membership — \$15.00

*Of this amount \$2.00 is allocated to the cost of the
newsletter subscription (10 issues per year).



FMP